



A Job Well Done!

By Deb Laferty-Bennett
CFCRB Field Coordinator

The persistence and professionalism of the Powell County CFCRB members — Wendy Birchfield, Sally Ritchie, Teresa Spencer and Virginia Todd — ensured that one foster child is receiving the care deserved by all foster children. This particular case is that of a 17-year-old female in relative placement.

At the time of this placement, the board expressed its concerns to all authorities involved. When reviewing the files and asking

about the child, they were always assured that she was fine. Upon the field coordinator receiving a phone call from a concerned party, it was revealed that this child had not received the necessary services for more than a year and that no contact had been made by the caseworker with this child. While in relative placement, this child was sexually abused by her caretaker and was living in deplorable conditions.

This situation was especially sad because this foster child is mentally challenged and has a lot of problems due to past sexual abuse.

This board immediately went to work. They met with a judge

to see that a guardian *ad litem* was appointed to this young woman. Knowing that she was ready to age out of the system didn't stop this board. We met with the people involved and were instrumental in a guardian being appointed until the age of 21 so that she will be placed where she can be taught skills and receive the proper counseling and education.

CFCRB volunteers do make a difference in the lives of our foster children. These members attended every court hearing and every meeting, and used their voices for a young woman who could not speak for herself.



Citizen Foster Care Review Board
Dependent Children's Services Department
Administrative Office of the Courts
100 Millcreek Park
Frankfort, KY 40601



The Caring Difference

The Newsletter of the Citizen Foster Care Review Board

After all, a home should be forever . . .

Voters pass Family Court amendment to Kentucky Constitution

By John Burgess
Court Improvement
Professional Services Supervisor

The people of Kentucky sent an important message to families and children by voting "Yes" to Family Court in the November 2002 general election. The amendment passed with a resounding victory in all 120 counties, receiving more than 75 percent of the vote.

Family Court hears only cases that affect Kentucky's families and uses a "One Family, One Judge, One Court" approach to case management. This allows family issues to be presented in a single court with the same judge hearing all matters involving a particular family. It also ensures that domestic disputes are settled with as little delay and hardship as possible.

Family Court has jurisdiction over family related matters, such as dissolution of marriage; child custody, support and visitation; paternity; adoption; domestic violence; and dependency, neglect and child abuse cases.

Family Court is a division of Circuit Court, Kentucky's highest trial court level, and employs full-time judges with the same qualifications as other circuit judges.

Another benefit is that Family Court links families with a comprehensive social service system. This helps families navigate the complicated legal system and utilize social workers, support staff, drug and alcohol treatment specialists, and other resources.

The 2002 Kentucky General Assembly voted to place the Family Court amendment on the general election ballot. Passage of the constitutional amendment allowed Family Court to move beyond project status and continue to operate successfully without the possibility of constitutional challenges. In addition, Family



Chief Justice of Kentucky Joseph E. Lambert, left, and Chief Family Court Judge Kevin Garvey of Jefferson County celebrated the Family Court amendment victory on election night in Louisville.

Court continues to work with communities to protect the needs of children and families.

Under the leadership of Chief Justice Joseph Lambert, the Family Court program continues to move forward. It currently serves 42 counties and nearly 2 million Kentuckians — nearly half of the state's population. The program will continue to expand into additional counties as financial resources become available. While 32 states have variations of Family Court, Kentucky's program is so progressive and successful that it is considered a national model.

For more information, contact the Family Court Department at 800-928-2350 or famctmanager@mail.aoc.state.ky.us.

What's Inside

- 2 A message from former State Chair Beth Lucas
- 2 Anita Williams named 2003-2004 state chair
- 3 From the General Manager's Perspective
- 3 Statewide Teddy Bear Campaign
- 4 Christy Reeves given 2002 State Chairperson's Award
- 5 2002 Volunteer Conference Highlights
- 6 A View From the Bench
- 7 Form Focus
- 8 A Job Well Done!

CFCRB volunteers make the system better for children



By Elizabeth C. Lucas
2000-2002 CFCRB State Chair

During my 11-year affiliation with the Citizen Foster Care Review Board, I have met a number of people who have made lasting impressions.

Reviewers who have dedicated private and family time to board meetings and training sessions. Committee members and Executive Committee members who have given up countless weekdays and weekends to discuss issues and develop solutions. Staff, from both the CFCRB and the CFC, who work relentlessly to pursue quality process improvement and service to volunteers and children.

Without recognition, without glory, day in and day out, these people fight the fear of change to make the system work for the children of the commonwealth.

The challenge we face as an organization is to help others see that the fear of change is minimal compared to the fear of living with a system that doesn't work as well as it should. Whether we are talking about changes in training, legislation, organization bylaws, or the adoption process, let us remain focused on our mission ... finding viable, long-term solutions for children and families.

I am confident that the new Executive Committee board members, under the leadership of experienced veteran Anita Williams, will continue the good work that has been initiated over time. My hope for her is a board and a staff that provide the support, respect, and dedication that she has provided to me during my tenure as state chair.

It has been a pleasure serving you and I look forward to working with you in the coming years.

Anita Williams named 2002-2004 state chair

Anita C. Williams of McCracken County has been named the 2002-2004 CFCRB state chair. A former teacher and avid children's advocate, Anita has been a CFCRB volunteer since 1988. She previously served as state chair from 1996-1998. Most recently she served as state vice chair and chair of the Conference Committee for the 2002 conference in Bowling Green.



Anita is a former high school English teacher with a bachelor's degree in English and business, and a master's degree in secondary education from Murray State University. In August 2003, she will receive her specialist in community counseling from Murray.

Her other volunteer activities in the community include serving as chair of the Abraham Hall Emergency Youth Shelter board of directors, as chair of the Foster Care Committee on the McCracken County Family Court Council and as a member of the West Kentucky United Methodist Family Services board of directors.

She has been instrumental in arranging foster parent trainings in Family Court and spends many hours every October on the McCracken County Family Court Foster Parent Appreciation Dinner. She has worked on special projects such as suitcase campaigns for foster children, renovation and decoration of the Department of Community Based Services' visitation room for families and children, and a project to provide Life Books for children in care.



Form Focus: The CFCRB Review Form

By John Burgess
Court Improvement
Professional Services Supervisor

As you may have noticed, a new review form went into effect in July 2002. Many of you have already begun to use this new form and have already received instructions from your field coordinator. The following tips serve a refresher course to the most significant changes to the form.

There is now space for five children as opposed to three. Several reviewers had requested that the review form be expanded to include more children.

Factors Leading to Removal was individualized for each child on the new form. For this item, you can write the judicial finding (abuse, neglect or dependency) in the space provided. You will find the judicial finding on the AOC disposition form in the case file. After Aug. 1, 2002, judges began using a new form for adjudication, at which a finding of fact is made. You will be able to determine the case type from this order.

Number of Social Worker Changes is now *Social Worker Changed Since Last Review*. This eliminates the need for counting the number of social workers that appear in the file and requires only a "Yes/No" response.

The "needs" items are now consolidated into four checkboxes. The new question measuring the needs of the child(ren) states "*Do You Believe the Following Needs Are Being Met?*" (*Medical/Health, Psychological/Counseling, Education/School, Sibling Visitation, if applicable*).

Unlike past forms, there is now a space where you can alert the judge if the permanency hearing has not been scheduled or is past due. The permanency review plays an important role in a child's opportunity for permanent placement, and it is important to complete this item.

One of the items asks when you believe it would be reasonable for the child(ren) to be in a permanent placement. While a challenging question to answer, this item must be on the form because federal law requires that this finding must be made during the case review. Your response to this question cannot be found on any particular form in the file. It is simply *your opinion*. Consider saving this as the last question you answer. After having considered all factors required for the rest of the form, you may have a better idea of when the child should be in a permanent placement.

Finally, the guardian *ad litem* is no longer on the distribution list. Because the GAL accesses the court file, he or she will see a copy of the review form during his or her review of the court file prior to hearings. However, if your board would like to continue to provide copies of your reviews to GALs, please feel free to do so.

While reviewing cases can be a challenging and difficult task, please remember the importance of each item on our review form. Your case reviews do make a difference in the lives of children in out-of-home care.

If you have any questions or comments regarding the CFCRB Review Form, please contact your field coordinator or call the AOC central office at 800-928-2350.

The Caring Difference

Volume IX, Number I • Spring/Summer 2003

Dependent Children's Services Department
Administrative Office of the Courts
100 Millcreek Park • Frankfort, Kentucky 40601
800-928-2350 • www.kycourts.net

CFCRB Executive Committee
Anita Williams, Chair
Angie Funk, Vice Chair
Elizabeth Lucas, Past Chair
Martha Garland, Region 1
Charlene Greer, Region 2
Curtis Williams, Region 2
Bernice Crawhorn, Region 3
Gwenn Reome-Lansing, Region 4
Lea Fischbach, Region 4
Darlene Snyder, Region 5
Mike Hodge, Region 6
Wendy Birchfield, Region 7
Christy Fitch, Region 8

State Committee Chairs
William "Bill" Goetz, Legislative Committee
Elizabeth Lucas, Nominating Committee
Crystal Bohlander, Training Committee
Shelia Dalton, Public Relations Committee
Martha Garland, Recognition Committee
Angie Funk, Conference Committee

Editorial Staff
Shelia Dalton, Editor
Deb Laferty-Bennett, Assistant Editor
Leigh Anne Hiatt, Graphic Design

?

What
Do
You
Think?

We want your e-mail address!

If you would like to receive Citizen Foster Care Review Board news and updates by e-mail, please complete the insert included with this newsletter and return it to Mae Philbeck by **June 30, 2003**. Or you can contact her at 800-928-2350 or maep@mail.aoc.state.ky.us.

A View From the Bench



By Larry Thompson
Family Court Judge,
Pike County

Upon being asked to submit an article for "A View From the

Bench," my first thoughts turned to my actual view from the bench, which is usually a courtroom full of frowning faces. I quickly learned that most of our litigants do not want to be in court and do not want to return.

However, I assume that our readers are looking for something a bit more insightful. So, instead, I will focus on the need for our local Citizen Foster Care Review Board and how it helps me.

The first lesson that a judge learns upon taking the bench is that he or she must control the docket, which means that vigilance in moving cases along is important. If judges expeditiously resolve cases they accomplish two things: The docket moves smoothly and the litigants have a final resolution to their case. Litigants may not like a court's decision, but once they receive it, they can get on with their lives.

Most of my time as a judge is spent preparing to hear and hearing cases. Once we have decided in a case, we generally do not dwell on that case, but move immediately to the next one. The one exception to this is in cases involving dependency, neglect and abuse of children.

As with the other cases we hear, we must move these cases through the system expeditiously.

However, once we have reached a disposition in a case and a child has been committed, we have a statutory duty to follow up on these cases. Unlike other cases we deal with, these cases are not over when we reach a final disposition.

As judges, we must strive not to fall into the old adage of "out of sight, out of mind." Once committed, a child needs our continued attention. We need to be vigilant in the follow up of these cases to help these children obtain some form of permanency in their lives. This is where our local CFCRBs come into play.

The chief task of our local CFCRBs is to help ensure we take every possible step to achieve a permanent home for these children. Children are like adults in that they need to be able to get on with their lives. KRS 620.020(8) defines permanency as "... a relationship between a child and an adult which is intended to last a lifetime, providing commitment and continuing in the child's relationships and a sense of belonging."

Our local boards do an excellent job of being my eyes and ears in

these cases. They take time to review these cases in detail and make specific recommendations to the court concerning any steps needed to help these children.

As much as we would like to think we always know what is going on in a case, we must rely on our local CFCRBs. The reports they submit provide an excellent overview of what has gone on since I committed the child and, more importantly, what should be done to help these young people attain some form of permanency in their lives. CFCRBs do an excellent job as watchdogs.

I have served on the bench for approximately seven years, four as a District Court judge and three as a Family Court judge. During this period, I can honestly state that the reports submitted by our local CFCRBs are some of the most important documents I have received. These individuals provide an essential service to the court. I want to thank those who serve on our local board and those who serve throughout the state. The judiciary appreciates your services.



On the Calendar

Meetings • Events • Trainings

CFCRB Committee Meetings

June 27 Training Committee Meeting, Elizabethtown

Training Sessions

June 21 Initial Training, Frankfort

July 12 Initial Training, Louisville

July 28 Continuing Education, Paducah

For more information, call the AOC central office at 800-928-2350

Changes can lead to new directions, positive improvements



From the General Manager's Perspective

By Patrick Yewell
Dependent Children's Services Department

This year's legislative session was perhaps the most difficult I have gone through. Kentucky faced a \$500 million deficit this past year. The Kentucky Court of Justice suffered millions of dollars in budget reductions. Unfortunately, most states across the country are facing the same dilemma. Every CFCRB program I have talked to faced drastic cuts to their programs.

Kentucky's CFCRB program remains intact, thanks to the strong support from Chief Justice Joseph Lambert and AOC Director Cicely Jaraz Lambert. The gains we made in recent years have not been lost and the direct service to our volunteers will not be affected.

Trainings will continue, along with field coordinator support to your local boards. Although we will be

going to a biennial conference, we will have limited funds on the alternate years to provide more regional and local trainings.

I believe difficult times can often lead to positive outcomes. It gives us a chance to reflect on how we do things. By holding a conference every other year and providing additional regional events, perhaps we will be able to reach more volunteers. I also believe it will give us more time to plan for our conference and the ability to improve our training efforts.

On a brighter note, I want to thank all of the volunteers who played a role in the recent teddy bear project. We were able to collect more than 3,500 teddy bears. The bears were distributed across the state to Family Court and Cabinet for Families and Children offices. I know the children who received the teddy bears were extremely happy. There is something about a small stuffed animal that not only provides a child with a smile, but a small sense of comfort and security.

Note: I want to apologize for the delay in producing our quarterly newsletter. We've made several changes in the publication and look forward to getting back on track in sending you The Caring Difference.

CFCRB, Key Club team up for statewide Teddy Bear Campaign

By Billy Stover
CFCRB Field Coordinator

Helping "one child at a time" was the goal of a joint project carried out by Key Club International and the Administrative Office of the Courts in Frankfort. The two entities worked together and collected more than 3,500 teddy bears! These bears were distributed to the Cabinet for Families and Children statewide. The bears will be given to children when they are removed from their homes and placed into foster care.

"A new teddy bear can help comfort children who are making the transition to foster care," said Patrick Yewell, general manager of the Dependent Children's Services Department. "We commend the Kentucky Key Club for taking on a project that will benefit children who are adjusting to out-of-home care."

Yewell was approached with the idea by Christie Mitchell, a Franklin County High School junior who is currently serving as governor of the Kentucky and Tennessee District of Key Club International. Key Club is a student organization that teaches students to be socially responsible. This year the Key Club wanted to take on a project that would benefit abused, neglected or dependent children.

"I want to thank all of the CFCRB volunteers who



CFCRB Field Coordinators Billy Stover, left, and Bruce Jones are buried under a mountain of teddy bears. More than 3,500 teddy bears were collected for Kentucky's foster children during a statewide drive in March.

helped collect the teddy bears," said Patrick. "This project could not have been successful without each of you. All of you should feel very proud of the smile on the face of each child who receives a bear."

Christy Reeves honored with 2002 State Chairperson’s Award

Presented by Elizabeth C. Lucas
2000-2002 State Chair

The State Chairperson’s Award is the most prestigious award presented to a volunteer for dedication, leadership and exemplary volunteer service to the Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Board program. Since the inception of the award in 1996, only four volunteers have been awarded this honor.

As reviewers, we must embody the true meaning of service through our words and our actions. It was my pleasure last year to present the award to a behind-the-scenes kind of volunteer, Shelia Dalton.

This year, the recipient of the State Chairperson’s Award is an in-your-face kind of advocate. She says what she thinks, provides results in short order and tackles projects with reckless abandonment. “Let nothing stand in the way” is her motto and she practices what she preaches.

Inquisitive, aggressive and deadline-driven, this year’s recipient began her service as a local board member and local chair in 1998. She was first exposed to CFCRB committee work as a member of the Conference Committee in 1999. This year she returned to committee work as a member of the Legislative

Committee where she co-led the Policy and Procedure Manual team. In 2002, with a “pull up your sleeves and dig in attitude,” she completed a complex, detailed project that has been in the making for more than three years.

It truly is an understatement to say that countless hours of research, formatting, discussion and editing were involved in this labor of love. Under her nurturing guidance and scrutinizing review, the updated Policy and Procedure Manual is finished ... at least for now. The manual is user-friendly, visually appealing and accessible at your fingertips via the CFCRB section of the Administrative Office of the Courts Web site at www.kycourts.net.

A mother of six, her work for children in her community has not gone unnoticed by other organizations. In fact, she was presented the 2002 Champion for Children Award for her efforts in establishing a CASA program in Boyd County. Lauded by Boyd County District Judge George Davis as a go-getter, she single-handedly obtained office space, raised funds, and promoted the initiative that created the Boyd County CASA program. In less than a year, she recruited and trained more than a dozen volunteers who oversee scores of cases in her home county.



2000-2002 CFCRB State Chair Elizabeth C. Lucas, right, presented Christy Reeves with the 2002 State Chairperson’s Award for her outstanding service to the CFCRB. The presentation took place at the 2002 CFCRB Volunteer Conference in Bowling Green.

During her four-year affiliation with the CFCRB, this person has studied and researched the history of the organization to understand why we do what we do. I respect her fortitude, integrity and dedication. I hope her involvement with CFCRB spans many, many years.

The 2002 recipient of the State Chairperson’s Award is Christy Reeves from Boyd County. Thank you, Christy, for all of your hard work and dedication to the children of Kentucky.

‘Caring for Kids’
400 volunteers attend 2002 CFCRB conference

By Angie Funk
2002 State Conference Chair

The focus of 2002 CFCRB Conference was “Caring for Kids,” with volunteers receiving training to help them provide reviews that better reflect whether children and their families are receiving appropriate services while in out-of-home care. The conference also featured sessions about educational and medical needs of children, as well as counseling issues and placement options. The three-day event took place in November at the Bowling Green/Warren County Convention Center.

A highlight of the conference was the panel of judges who offered guidance about the information volunteers can provide which will be most helpful to judges as they make important decisions about each child’s case.

Jennifer Shaffer, a former foster child, served as Sunday’s motivational speaker, offering insight about her life as a foster child and discussing the experiences that helped her become a successful young woman.

Each year, the conference banquet celebrates Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Board volunteer efforts and serves as a thank you for all of the work volunteers do across the state. Entertainment for the banquet was provided by Girls Incorporated, a national nonprofit youth organization dedicated to inspiring all girls to be strong, smart and bold.

Dr. Suzie Cashwell, who holds a doctorate in social welfare, gave an inspiring presentation as she related her experiences as a foster mother and an adoptive



The 2002 CFCRB Conference provided reviewers with the opportunity to develop professional technical training and skills. Seminars and workshops addressed topics pertaining to board chairs and vice chairs, the medical and educational needs of children in foster care, counseling issues that arise from abuse and neglect, and the placement options and services available to children and their families.

parent. Dr. Cashwell also led one of the workshop sessions on counseling as a resource to help meet the emotional needs of children in care.

Other speakers at the banquet included Dr. Viola Miller, secretary of the Cabinet for Families and Children, and Melinda Wheeler, deputy director of the Administrative Office of the Courts.

Special thanks go out to the AOC staff, the Conference Committee, the Host Committee and all who played important roles in making the 2002 conference such a success. Thanks also go to Jim Regan, who once again hosted the Hospitality Room where volunteers could meet and mingle.

We also appreciate each of the volunteers who work so hard throughout the year to ensure judges receive the information they need to better understand and adjudicate cases of children in out-of-home care.

Every volunteer is critical to helping the Kentucky Citizen Foster Care Review Board fulfill its role in advocating for permanency and improved care for foster children.



Nearly 400 volunteers from across the state attended the 2002 CFCRB Conference in Bowling Green. The theme for the conference was “Caring for Kids.”

Q
&
A

“When I see the abbreviation UR in the service recordings, what does that mean?” —Linda Roberts, Chair of Daviess B CFCRB

The abbreviation UR stands for utilization review. This meeting occurs in various Department for Community Based Services regions when a child might be removed from home and placed in foster care. Those present at this meeting are the case worker, the Family Services office supervisor and at least one specialist from the DCBS region in question. They discuss

circumstances in the home and what options are available, including removal. The group then decides if removal is in the best interest of the child. If they decide that removal is in the best interest of the child, the case worker then contacts the judge. Currently, utilization reviews are not part of DCBS’ statewide policies, but many regions are conducting them.